



Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report 2021-22

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Foreword from the Partnership Chair

This is the third annual report of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership, it covers the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. We want to first recognise that through this period COVID-19 continued to affect everyone in the Cheshire East community.

This report recognises the work of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership through this challenging year and that those challenges that remain that we will continue to address in 2022/23.

If you have any questions about the report or the information contained in it, please contact me at CESCP@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Paula Wedd, Chair, Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

The Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has continued to lead the safeguarding work of the borough.

The focus of this report will be on the three Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership priorities of

- ❖ Neglect
- ❖ Contextual safeguarding
- ❖ Emotional Health and Wellbeing of our vulnerable children

The statutory guidance [Working Together 2018 \(WT18\)](#) requires each area to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in their local area. This report sets out what we have done over the past year and what we plan to do next year to make Cheshire East a safer place for children and young people.

This report is aimed at everyone involved in safeguarding children, including members of the local community, professionals and volunteers who work with children, young people, and families.

A copy of this report will be sent to senior leaders and stakeholders in our area, including the Chief Executive of the council, the Leader of the Council, and the Executive Director of Children's Services. The report will also be sent to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Young People's Trust Board, Community Safety Partnership, and the Council's Children and Families Committee. Individual agencies will also be encouraged to present this report through their internal boards and scrutiny arrangements.

The Partnership

Senior representatives from the statutory partners: Cheshire East Council, Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group, and Cheshire Police, are the [Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#). Also represented are the Youth Justice Service, National Probation Service, Public Health, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and East Cheshire Trust NHS. These executive members work together to keep children and young people safe from harm.

The partnership was responsible for scrutinising the work of its partners to ensure that services provided to children and young people make a positive difference.

The main role is to co-ordinate and to ensure the effectiveness of work undertaken by each agency on the board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Cheshire East.

The chair of the partnership was held by the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Independent Scrutiny

The partnership commits to active involvement in Cheshire East Council's scrutiny arrangements, including the Local Authorities Chief Executive's quarterly safeguarding review meeting.

The partnership has commissioned 3 local safeguarding practice reviews led by independent chairs during 2021/22.

Ofsted conducted a Focused visit of Cheshire East Social Services on the 3 and 4 November 2021. The inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in need or subject to a protection plan and found there had been an improvement in the overall quality of work with children who are in need of help or protection. Cheshire Youth Justice Service were inspected by the HM Inspectorate of Probation in July 2021. They received an overall rating of 'Good' following this joint inspection.

Our Vision for the Children and Young People of Cheshire East

It is the right of every child and young person in Cheshire East to enjoy a healthy and happy childhood, grow up feeling safe from abuse or neglect and thrive in an environment that enables them to fulfil their potential.

Children and Young People in Cheshire East - Our Child Population

Whilst most children do particularly well in Cheshire East, the borough has 18 areas which are within the top 20% of the most deprived areas in England, affecting 33,350 people or 8.6% of Cheshire East's population. Thirteen of these areas are in Crewe, with two in Macclesfield, one in Wilmslow, one in Alsager, and one in Congleton. Overall, relative deprivation has increased since 2010, as only sixteen areas were previously within the top 20% of most deprived areas.

There are approximately 78,200 children and young people under the age of 18 in Cheshire East, 51% are male and 49% are female. Children and young people make up approximately 20% of the total population.

15.2% of primary pupils are entitled to free school meals (an indicator of deprivation) compared to 23.7% nationally. 15.1% of secondary pupils are entitled to free school meals compared to 22.3% nationally.

The majority of pupils' ethnic backgrounds are reported to be White British (84.3% of primary pupils and 84.7% of secondary pupils), albeit the ratio has reduced slightly from last year. The biggest minority groups in Cheshire East schools are 'white other' (5%), Asian/ Asian British (2.9%), and mixed/ multiple ethnicities (4.1%).

There are just over 100 different first languages recorded for primary and secondary pupils, although only 8.4% of primary pupils and 6.4% of secondary pupils have a first language other than English, compared to national figures of 21.2% and 17.5%, respectively, unlike previously the increase from last year it is at a higher rate than the increase nationally.

Listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people

November Children's Rights Month

November Children's Rights Month is an annual celebration of children's rights across the borough, developed by young people for adults to experience life in their shoes based on the outcomes of the Children and Young People's Plan. Within Cheshire East we worked with Cheshire East Youth Council to make it a celebration of the positive participation of children and young people for services within Cheshire East and show how we take their views seriously.

The theme of 2021's November Children's Rights Month was how children's rights were affected during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key events in 2021 included:

- ❖ Taboo – Mental Health Conference
- ❖ Mental Health Awareness Training for professionals
- ❖ Inclusive sex education sessions for young people with Body Positive North West
- ❖ Children's Trust Board take over
- ❖ Young people presenting at Children and Families Committee
- ❖ Launch of the SHOUT Campaign at White Ribbon Day

On reviewing the Section 175 audit, it was extremely positive to read all the different ways in which schools capture the voice of the child in relation to safeguarding matters. The majority referenced using the 3 houses model as well as student surveys and assemblies.

Improving engagement with frontline staff - e-bulletins

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership has continued to publish its frontline bulletins. The frequency of these was increased due to the need to convey information to practitioners during the challenges of working during the pandemic. They have covered a variety of topics including:

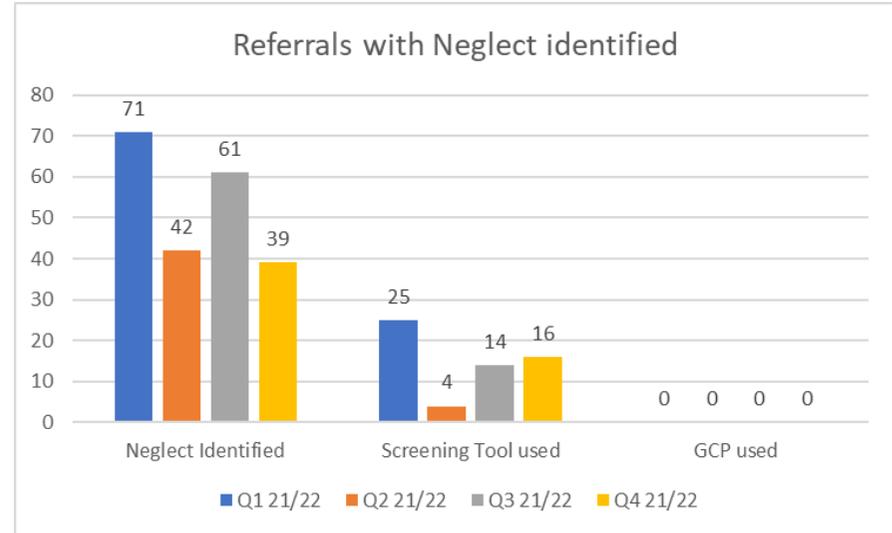
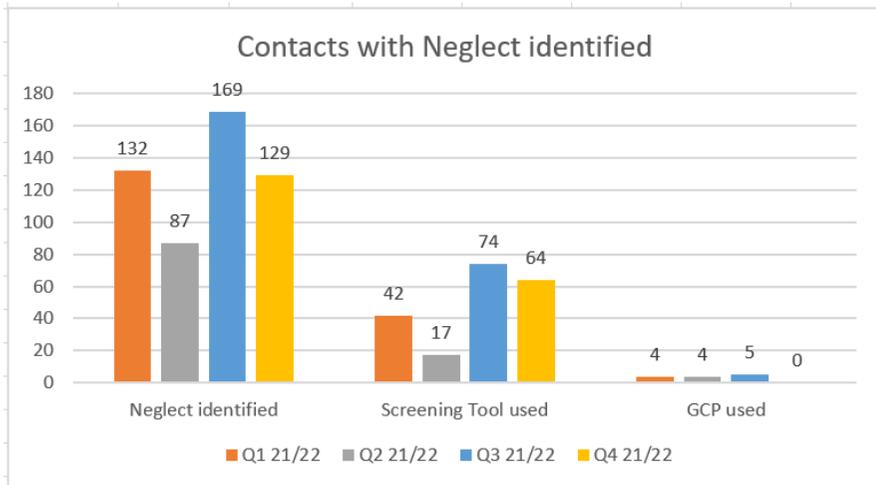
- ❖ COVID Support grant
- ❖ Adverse childhood experiences training
- ❖ Psychological First Aid Training
- ❖ Safe Sleep Week
- ❖ Pan Cheshire Missing from home and care newsletter
- ❖ Journey First Programme
- ❖ The Childrens Society Working together toolkit
- ❖ Become a foster carer in Cheshire East link
- ❖ Recording children as 'not brought' not 'did not attend' for medical appointments
- ❖ Make your Mark and UK Youth Parliament Election
- ❖ Cheshire East Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership Strategy
- ❖ NHS guidance for parents on looking after children with Covid-19
- ❖ Summer Activities programme
- ❖ Hate crime 7-minute briefing
- ❖ Early Help Scenario
- ❖ Household Support Fund
- ❖ Out of school settings DofE briefing
- ❖ Childrens Mental health Week
- ❖ Opportunity with the Cheshire Youth Commission
- ❖ Coroners court support service
- ❖ ICON Translation

Feedback from executive members and those participating in the COVID-19 response group has been that this method of communication is effective in supporting them in promoting the partnership and in disseminating safeguarding information within their services.

Cheshire East Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Priorities

Priority 1 - Neglect

The Neglect Strategic Board has met quarterly throughout the last year to measure the impact of the Strategy in responding to children and families experiencing Neglect. There is a scorecard developed to support the Partnership in understanding the activity across Cheshire East relating to neglect and to encourage a greater curiosity about what the data tells us about impact for children and quality of practice to identify neglect at the earliest opportunity.



The Neglect Strategy coupled with the Practice Guidance is explicit about the use of Screening Tools by the Partnership to support their identification of Neglect with children and families and to inform the need for further support and intervention. We have a high number of contacts received directly from family members who we would not expect to complete a Screening Tool and our Police colleagues are the highest professional referrer, who complete VPAs (Vulnerable Person Assessment) to support a Contact instead of a Neglect Screening Tool. We would expect a Screening Tool from all remaining professionals. We have seen an increase in the number completed by Education settings which is excellent. Graded Care Profiles (GCPs) are a far more in-depth assessment of Neglect and in the main are completed by Cheshire East Family Service or Children's Social Care. We have seen an increase in the number of GCPs being completed when children are subject to Child in Need which is positive, however we want to measure the success of neglect being identified and positive intervention prior to a family needing intervention

from Children's Social Care. We will want to see an increase of GCPs informing Early Help Plans over the coming 12 months. The Neglect Board seeks reassurance from individual agencies about how they are embedding the strategy into practice and how they know of the impact. We will refresh the measures of the strategy for 2022/2023 to focus curiosity in everyday practice and ownership across all levels of the partnership.

We have delivered:

- ❖ Practice Guidance for all practitioners working with children and families who experience neglect at all levels of need
- ❖ All agencies have promoted the Neglect Strategy within their organisation
- ❖ Developed a partnership data set for neglect to continuously tell us what our picture is in Cheshire East
- ❖ Held a Neglect Strategic Board to analyse the data in Cheshire East
- ❖ Reported outcomes from the Board to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Quality Assurance Sub-group.
- ❖ Delivered Training to the Partnership on Neglect and the use of GCP2

Measures for success – Activity that will tell us of the impact:

- ❖ multi-agency auditing regarding all aspects of neglect and the practice delivered to children and families to address neglectful parenting
- ❖ Consultation with children and families regarding the impact of any level of intervention through feedback and participation
- ❖ Review survey with frontline practitioners to understand their confidence in practice and their view of their impact.

Priority 2 - Child Exploitation

In 2021-22 there were 326 contacts to the front door where child exploitation was a factor affecting either the individual or a family member. This related to 281 separate children. 138 of these (42%) were accompanied by a screening tool. 104 of the contacts resulted in a referral to social care.

- ❖ The Child Exploitation and Serious Organised Crime Strategic Group (CE/SOC) meet on a quarterly basis to review the impact of the strategy. Outcomes are reported from the group to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Quality Assurance Sub-group.
- ❖ In 2021/22 the Contextual Safeguarding Operational Group continued to meet to share information monthly within a multi-agency arena to safeguard and protect children from potential sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, female genital mutilation, radicalisation, and honour-based violence. The meeting provides an arena to share intelligence and knowledge on young people, persons of interest and places/premises where there could be links to such exploitation and/or significant harm beyond a young person home.

In Cheshire East child exploitation continues to be a key priority for action for the next year and we will:

- Develop and deliver a training offer for all partnership agencies regarding Contextual Safeguarding
- Refresh the Contextual Safeguarding and Serious Organised Crime Strategy of 2019-2022
- Consult with children and families to inform the strategy
- Hold a further Serious Organised Crime Awareness Day with Safer Communities and Police colleagues, raising awareness across Cheshire East of CE and SOC

- Develop a scorecard to be scrutinised within the SOC/CE Strategic Group
- Undertake Multi-Agency Auditing into this cohort of children to measure impact
- Develop an offer of support to children and families across Early Help to identify and support diversion from Exploitation and Criminality at the earliest stage
- Enhance the focus of targeted disruption through Local Policing and Detached Youth Work within our communities
- Launch an All-Age Exploitation Strategy across PAN Cheshire

Priority 3 - Emotional health and wellbeing of our vulnerable children

We have delivered

- ❖ A joint service needs analysis has been completed in conjunction with Public Health. This is an in-depth piece of work which has taken place over the period of a couple of months. This will build on current mental health pathways to ensure a responsive and comprehensive offer or support is available for children.
- ❖ A mental health directory has been produced for professionals which details all mental health services across the continuum of need and provides details on referral mechanisms. This has been shared across the partnership
- ❖ Review of existing pathways and information sharing process has taken place. This will continue to be monitored and reported to the group.
- ❖ The self-harm pathway has been fully implemented and evaluated. This has been well received by multi-agency professionals in addition to children and families.

Continued development 2022/23

- ❖ Working with mental health commissioners within Cheshire East place building on the joint service needs analysis to ensure mental health services and pathways provide a responsive and comprehensive offer of support.
- ❖ Work with the multi-agency team to ensure that the family health hubs prioritise the needs of children with unmet emotional health and wellbeing needs
- ❖ Review of the self-harm information sharing pathway to ensure that families and young people are offered early help intervention at key touch points throughout the pathway including those children who are electively home educated.

Learning and Improvement

The Learning and Improvement Sub-group:

- ❖ received the Annual Training Report from the partnership's Training and Development Manager
- ❖ agreed an approach for continued delivery of safeguarding training
- ❖ agreed and approved the training charging policy in response to the COVID pandemic, removing any charge

Quality Assurance

A range of quality assurance activity supports performance monitoring which includes the multi-agency audit programme.

The scorecard covers a range of measures from all partners and is aligned with the areas of focus for the partnership The Quality Assurance Subgroup has:

- ❖ undertaken audits on Sexual Abuse and Neglect which also fed into Local Safeguarding Practice Review outcomes.
- ❖ Recommendations from RR/LSPRs are translated into actions
- ❖ scrutinised and monitored the progress of agreed actions from audits and reflective reviews
- ❖ scrutinised S175 and S11 submissions

Section 175

The responses shared in this audit were extremely detailed and gave Cheshire East Safeguarding Childrens Partnership a very clear outline of what schools have in place and what they are developing. It provided Cheshire East Safeguarding Childrens Partnership with the reassurance they needed around safeguarding practice in those schools. In addition, the survey has also captured many of the ways in which schools have adapted and enhanced their safeguarding procedures during COVID.

| Type of setting | % Completing S175 2020 | % Completing S175 2021 |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Independent School | 82% | 87% |
| Primary School | 93% | 93% |
| Secondary School | 80 | 95% |
| Special School | 100% | 85% |
| Colleges | 67% | 50% |
| Nursery | 100% | n/a |

In the majority of primary schools, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is identified as the headteacher. All schools indicated that they have at least one named Deputy Safeguarding Lead. All schools indicated that they have a Designated Safeguarding Governor.

This means that schools are compliant with expectations. The Safeguarding Children in Educational Settings (SCiES) Team undertook

analysis of the submissions, and a report was scrutinised by the Quality Assurance Sub-group.

Rapid Reviews and Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The Rapid Review process reviewed six cases during 2021/22; three of these resulted in Local Safeguarding Practice Reviews being started during the year.

As a result of learning identified in a number of these reviews a Safe Sleep week was held in December 2021. This involved a social media campaign promoting safe sleep particularly when ‘out of routine’ for example staying with relatives or consuming alcohol over the festive period. A lunch and learn session held via Teams, hosted by the Designated Doctor for safeguarding children and child deaths in Cheshire East where ‘Out of Routine: A Review of sudden unexpected death in infancy in families where children are considered at risk of significant harm – report by Childrens Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. was shared and discussed with practitioners from across the partnership and was well attended.

COVID-19

The initial response of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Childrens Partnership was to create a COVID response meeting to which both statutory and relevant partners were invited. This initially sought assurance from all partners that safeguarding child was a priority within the COVID lockdown response. This assurance was provided by all partners.

The terms of reference were established as:

- ❖ to ensure that multi-agency working remains effective in safeguarding children at a time when there are challenges to practice and additional vulnerabilities
- ❖ to ensure that there is a common understanding and risk assessment across all partner agencies as to the service that is being delivered and how it is delivered to children and families and that there is early notification across the partnership of any area of work that may be compromised for any agency that may impact on children and young people's safeguarding
- ❖ To ensure during COVID-19 restrictions that there is fluid coordination of multi-agency resources to ensure the most vulnerable children and families are safeguarded.

The safeguarding partners also agreed measures and plans to reduce the risk of contracting and spreading of the virus to children, young people, and their families and within our multi-agency workforce. A document was also created on our offer to safeguard and support children and families during COVID-19 where services shared their offer during COVID and that has been updated as the situation has evolved.

Amongst other outcomes:

- ❖ the partnership created a forum for operational considerations and check/challenge in real time as the COVID situation evolved

- ❖ kept vulnerable children not in education on the agenda
- ❖ safe sleep campaign discussed, campaign ran with all Pan Cheshire areas
- ❖ gained assurance relating to impact of staffing levels for services delivering to Children and Young people
- ❖ Spiking discussed and advice shared across the partnership
- ❖ using the learning from first lockdown to inform joint working on further periods of restriction

This meeting continued to fortnightly then monthly through the remainder of 2021/22.

Training and Development

Training continued to be significantly impacted because of the ongoing global covid-19 pandemic. CЕСP took measures to ensure that safeguarding training could continue to be delivered to all partners across the children and family's workforce, a great deal of work was undertaken to redevelop all face-to-face courses to a virtual delivery model. All courses were successfully rewritten and have been delivered virtually.

The decision to continue to deliver training virtually was reviewed at 3 monthly intervals by the learning and improvement subgroup.

Summary of the training year

51 multi-agency courses were delivered between March 2021 and April 2022. 1053 participants attended training via the CЕСP training programme, this number represents an increase of almost 400 individuals.

Attendance was across all areas of the children's workforce, including police, health, education, social care, children and families and the voluntary sector.

Cheshire East Safeguarding Childrens Partnership has delivered or coordinated the following learning and development processes alongside the existing training programme:

- ❖ GCP2 refresher training.
- ❖ Development and delivery of twilight sessions for ICON and GCP2
- ❖ Continued review of training materials to enhance virtual learning experience.
- ❖ Support to all training pool members to deliver courses confidently using virtual methods.

Key Priorities for 2022-23

Cheshire East Safeguarding Childrens Partnership has agreed shared priorities for our partnership and have adopted these as their initial plan

for supporting the protection and wellbeing of children and young people in Cheshire East. We will:

Improve frontline multi-agency practice through working on:

- Our approach to contextual safeguarding
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of our approach to neglect
- Emotional health and wellbeing of our vulnerable children

We aim to do this through our collective commitment to:

- Strategic leadership across the partnership – to make the safety of children and young people a priority.
- Challenge – through focused inquiries or investigations into practice or issues based on evidence, practitioner experience and the views of children and young people, for us to improve together.
- Learning – to achieve the highest standards of development and to ensure all practitioners have the skills and knowledge to be effective. This will include listening to the voice of children and young people and using what we hear to inform best practice.